

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
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AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILL
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
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TAGS: PEPR AO PO US
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR EASUM'S LUANDA REPORT

REF: LAGOS 1955

1. EMBASSY LISBON APPRECIATES AMBASSADOR EASUM'S THOROUGH
AND INFORMATIVE REPORTING ON CONDITIONS IN LUANDA.

REFTEL ADDS NEW INFORMATION AND PUTS IN PERSPECTIVE MANY BITS AND PIECES ALREADY KNOWN. WE ARE IN BASIC AGREEMENT WITH WHAT AMBASSADOR EASUM REPORTS ON DECLINING POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE MPLA (AND NETO IN PARTICULAR) IN LUANDA, THE STRENGTH OF UNITA AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FNLA, SHAKY RELATIONS WITH PORTUGAL, THE SPLIT IN TOP RANKS OF THE MPLA, AND THE DISASTROUS ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN GENERAL AND IN LUANDA IN PARTICULAR. HOWEVER, INFORMATION WE HAVE RECEIVED LEADS US TO A MORE NEGATIVE INTERPRETATION OF THE ACCEPTANCE OF CUBANS IN ANGOLA THAT THAT PORTRAYED IN REFTEL, ALTHOUGH WE AGREE WITH THE INDISPENSIBILITY OF THE CUBANS TO THE MPLA.

2. CUBAN BEHAVIOR: WE BELIEVE THAT ACCEPTANCE, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE POPULATION IN LUANDA, OF THE CUBANS HAS GREATLY DECREASED SINCE THEIR INITIAL WELCOME AS "LIBERATORS." LUANDA RESIDENTS ARE INCREASINGLY RESENTFUL OF THE RELATIVELY HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING ENJOYED BY THE CUBANS (ALTHOUGH WE AGREE IT IS LOWER THAN THAT OF EASTERN BLOC ADVISORS), THE APPEARANCE OF A PERMANENT PRESENCE CAUSED BY THE ARRIVAL OF CUBAN DEPENDENTS, AND THEIR OMNIPRESENCE. STORIES OF CUBAN LOOTING, RAPE, CRUELTY OF CUBAN SECRET POLICE AND PRISON OFFICIALS, AND TROOP MISBEHAVIOR ARE MUCH MORE FREQUENTLY HEARD HERE THAN

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REPORTS THAT THE TROOPS ARE DISCIPLINED AND KEEP TO THEMSELVES. POPULAR DISLIKE OF CUBANS IN ANGOLA HAS INCREASED TO THE POINT WHERE CUBANS ALWAYS TRAVEL IN GROUPS, AND DARE NOT ENTER SOME MPLA CONTROLLED AREAS.

3. CUBAN DOCTORS: REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED INDICATE THAT MOST OF THE CUBAN "DOCTORS" IN ANGOLA ARE NOT QUALIFIED PHYSICIANS BUT POORLY TRAINED PARAMEDICS. THERE ARE HORROR STORIES OF POOR MEDICAL TREATMENT TO LEND CREDENCE OF THESE REPORTS. WHILE EVEN AS PARAMEDICS THE CUBANS ARE FILLING A VITAL ROLE, THEIR LACK OF PROPER TRAINING IS PERCEIVED AND DETRACTS FROM THEIR OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS.

4. CUBAN COMBAT ROLE: AMBASSADOR EASUM'S REPORT THAT THE LOCAL FORCES ARE THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE, FOLLOWED BY FAPLA, AND FINALLY BY THE CUBANS CORROBORATES REPORTS REACHING HERE CONCERNING THE CUBAN'S ROLE ESPECIALLY IN STRONGLY-HELD UNITA AREAS, WHERE THEY ARE SINGLED OUT AS TARGETS. IN VIEW OF DOMESTIC CUBAN CONCERNs ABOUT WAR CASUALTIES, A POLICY OF WITHHOLDING CUBANS FROM COMBAT MAKES SENSE. IT HAS ITS PRICE, HOWEVER, IN

LOWER FAPLA/MILITIA EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST UNITA AND
CONTRIBUTES TO THE DETERIORATING POPULAR CUBAN ACCEPTANCE.

5. ANGOLAN SECURITY: WHILE THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY
IN LUANDA MAY FEEL LESS FEARFUL OF ARBITRARY VIOLENCE
NOW THAN PREVIOUSLY, WE BELIEVE THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE
AMONG FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN AND PORTUGUESE RESIDENTS OF
LUANDA. THE SECRET POLICE ARE PERVERSIVE, ACCORDING TO
REPORTS WE RECEIVE, AND DO NOT HESITATE TO ARREST
PERSONS ARBITRARILY.

6. FOREIGN MINISTER: WE HAVE ALSO HEARD FREQUENTLY
THAT FOREIGN MINISTER PAULO JORGE IS A "MODERATE" WHO
HAS EARNED HIGH REGARD AMONG MEMBERS OF THE LUANDA
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DIPLOMATIC CORPS. HE IS NOT, HOWEVER, A MEMBER OF THE
MPLA POLITBURO, BUT WAS RECENTLY ELECTED AS A "CANDIDATE
MEMBER" OF THE MPLA-LABOR PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE.
THIS IS APPARENTLY A JUNIOR POSITION IN THE CC, WHICH IS
SUBORDINATE TO THE POLITBURO.

7. EMBASSY ENDORSES AMBASSADOR EASUM'S RECOMMENDATION
THAT THE DEPT CONSIDER PERIODIC INFORMATION GATHERING
VISITS TO LUANDA. WE AGREE THAT SUCH VISITS BE TIED
TO SPECIFIC ISSUES IN ORDER NOT TO AROUSE ANGOLAN
SUSPICIONS.

8. FOR DEPT. EMBASSY LISBON WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE
RECEIVING AVAILABLE MAPS OF ANGOLA AND NAMIBIA.
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